

Testimony of Susan Lloyd Yolen, Vice President, Public Policy & Advocacy,

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To the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Hospitals

Regarding State Department of Public Health family planning program funds.

Senator Harp, Representative Candelaria and members of the subcommittee, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England appreciates the opportunity to provide you with information about the vital reproductive health services subsidized by the State Department of Public Health's longstanding family planning program within the DPH community health services budget.

The DPH Family Planning program funds preventive reproductive health care, pregnancy prevention and testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV testing at twelve Planned Parenthood centers across the state, in addition to three sites operated by subcontracting agencies. DPH funds allow Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) and its subcontractors to offer services on a sliding fee scale and at a fraction of what a private practitioner would charge.

Ultimately, any cut to the DPH family planning program would result in greater costs to the state: Low income women who access state-funded family planning services are able to prevent unintended pregnancies that would ultimately be funded by Medicaid dollars. Teens that give birth are less likely to graduate from high school and are more likely to rely on public assistance. Further, research by the Guttmacher Institute shows that **states save \$3.75 for every public dollar spent on family planning.**

Last year, the DPH family planning program provided 54,000 visits to 31,466 women, men and teens—54 percent above our annual projections. Of those served, eight percent were men, 20 percent were patients under age 20, 43 percent were people of color (African-American, Asian, Latino), and nearly 80 percent were low income. About half of those served by DPH are uninsured and pay out of pocket for their care. A recent patient survey showed that 40 percent of our family planning patients reported that they or their partner had either lost a job, had their hours reduced or had lost health insurance coverage in the past year.

Any cut to the DPH program would also be coming at a time when federal family planning and teen pregnancy prevention funds are threatened. Budget proposals approved recently by the US House would both eliminate the national Title X family program and defund Planned Parenthood affiliates nationwide. If this policy were to be enacted and combined with cuts to state family planning funds, the result would almost certainly be the closure of a number of Connecticut family planning centers.

In a February 17 letter to US House Speaker John Boehner objecting to the cuts to federal family planning funds, Governor Malloy and Lt. Governor Wyman noted that "Connecticut cannot meet its goal of providing high quality health care without Planned Parenthood's essential contribution."

We appreciate the Malloy Administration's confidence in our state's family planning services, and your understanding, in these difficult times, of the wisdom of investing in prevention services. Thank you.